

SENATOR WESELY: Yes, thank you. Mr. President and members of the body, I rise in opposition to the resolution and in support of the motion to kill. And I understand very much the concern and sincere support for the legislation that has been engendered by the League of Municipalities by various cities that would like to see this constitutional amendment passed, but it's round two, at least that I can recall, of dealing with the issue and in round one, this proposal was knocked out and killed and I'm hoping that here in round two we'll be able to do the same. However, I also recognize a lot of work has gone into this and perhaps there is a lot of commitments and support. Many of you may feel that you are obligated to this piece of legislation, but if that is the case, if it is destined to proceed, I hope at least we'll do it with our eyes open and recognize some flaws. Hopefully, enough of you will recognize these flaws are fatal and we'll see this bill put to rest. I have been concerned about this whole concept now for some time. It started when I chaired the Economic Development Committee in '85-86. We looked at a number of different proposals. At that time we had a number of initiatives that would have provided to local municipalities the ability to exempt taxes to provide various exemptions on property and other types of assistance through municipalities that were being proposed. A lot of tax breaks on the local level were what we were looking at. This was a heavy agenda item that has since disappeared with the exception of this proposal and instead we have moved toward tax exemptions on a statewide basis, LB 775, LB 773, LB 772, et cetera, where we have attempted to deal with economic development by adjusting taxes. That seems to be the most prevalent mode of economic development that we see in this state of late. Economic development is more than taxes. Economic development is more than public assistance in one form or another. It is education, it is roads, it is training, it is research, it is technical assistance, it is a vast array of different services and programs and we have, I think, in this state attempted to deal with some of those, but overall, I think we've focused far too much on the issue of taxes and public assistance. What you're doing with LR 11CA is, once again, going down that same road of trying to provide for economic development by providing public assistance to...to various business entities and you get into that mode and you have difficulty, you have trouble, you have equity issues. I think you've seen those already with LB 775. You have great concern about the fact that certain businesses get this assistance while other businesses do not. You have